

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 OC-06 CCO-00 SY-05 MCT-01

CAB-02 DOTE-00 FAA-00 OPR-02 A-01 IGA-02 /101 W

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P R 221614Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1032

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ADDIS ABABA 10465

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT ELAB ET

SUBJECT: EPMG TO CLAMP DOWN ON POSSIBLE STRIKES

SUMMARY: RUMORS OF IMPENDING STRIKES IN FIELDS OF TRANSPORTATION, WATER AND POWER SUPPLY WHICH HAD SURFACED WITHIN PAST FEW DAYS BECAME PARTIAL REALITY TODAY WHEN SEVERAL DISTRICTS OF ADDIS ABABA WERE WITHOUT WATER AND ELECTRICITY AS OF THIS MORNING. IN SHARPLY WORDED NEWS-PAPER ARTICLE, EPMG CHARGED EPRP ELEMENTS WITH INSTIGATING PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS TO GO ON STRIKE IN PROTEST AGAINST SEPT. 21 ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXCHANGE OF OLD ETHIOPIAN CURRENCY FOR NEW (ADDIS ABABA 10436). GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THAT SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN GIVEN ORDERS "TO TAKE APPROPRIATE REVOLUTIONARY MEASURES ON THE SPOT AGAINST ANARCHISTS INTIMIDATING WORKERS TO STRIKE IN ORDER TO REVERSE ONGOING REVOLUTION." END SUMMARY:.

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1. SINCE REPORTED BOYCOTT BY ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES

WORKERS AND OTHERS OF REVOLUTION DAY PARADE, THERE HAVE BEEN INCREASING UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT SOME EAL EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN ARRESTED. THIS, COMBINED WITH SUDDEN ANNOUNCEMENT YESTERDAY OF NEW MONETARY REFORM, LED TO RUMORS OF IMPENDING STRIKES BY TELECOMMUNICATIONS, AIRLINES, WATER AND POWER SUPPLY WORKERS. THIS MORNING PORTIONS OF CITY WERE INDEED WITHOUT WATER AND ELECTRICITY, AND SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF WORKERS AT TOBACCO MONOPOLY FAILED TO REPORT TO WORK, ALTHOUGH IT APPEARS THAT EAL AND COMMUNICATIONS PERSONNEL ARE OPERATING ON NORMAL SCHEDULE.

2. ALTHOUGH ENTIRE CITY NOT AFFECTED AND THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE UNUSUAL SECURITY FORCE ACTIVITY ON STREETS, SHARPLY WORDED ANTI-EPRP ARTICLE IN TODAY'S PRESS INDICATES SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH EPMG VIEWS THIS LATEST DEVELOPMENT. ARTICLE ACCUSES FORMER CONFEDERATION OF ETHIOPIAN LABOR UNIONS (CELU) LEADERSHIP OF COLLUDING WITH IMPERIALISTS AND BOURGEOISIE, WHILE PRETENDING TO PROMOTE INTERESS OF OPPRESSED WORKERS. IT DESCRIBED EPRP AS ANARCHIST GROUP COMPOSED OF OFF-SPRING OF FEUDALISTS WHO HAD TRIED TO INFILTRATE WORKERS TO UNDERMINE REVOLUTION. SUCH ELEMENTS, ARTICLE CLAIMED, WOULD NATURALLY BE GRIEVEDBY PROCLAMATION ON EXCHANGE OF CURRENCY NOTES, SINCE OLD CURRENCY WAS INTENDED TO BE USED BY THEM TO FINANCE ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES OR TO BE LOANED AT EXHORBITANT INTEREST RATES. AS RESULT, EPRP WAS ACTIVELY EN-GAGING IN INSTIGATING PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS TO GO ON STRIKE.

3. ARTICLE EXHORTED PROGRESSIVE FORCES TO IGNORE EPRP AGITATION AND TO STRUGGLE AGAINST ENEMIES OF REVOLUTION. PMAC HAS GIVEN SECURITY FORCES ORDERS TO TAKE APPROPRIATE REVOLUTIONARY MEASURES ON SPOT AGAINST INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS WHO INSTIGATE WORK STOPPAGES OR WHO GO ON STRIKE. AT SAME TIME GOVERNMENT ASSURED PROTECTION TO ALL WORKERS WHO REPORT ON SCHEUDLE TO FULFILL THEIR ASSIGNED DUTIES.

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4. COMMENT: WHILE EPMG IS ATTEMPTING TO RELATE STRIKE ACTIONS TO CURRENCY REFORM, IT IS DIFFUCLT TO BELIEVE THAT WORKERS WOULD WALK OUT FOR THAT REASON ALONE. ALTHOUGH WAGE EARNER WITH MODEST CASH SAVINGS STORED UNDER MATTRESS WILL SUFFER TO SOME EXTENT FROM SURCHAGE ON EXCHANGE OF LARGER BILLS, BIG LOSERS HERE WILL BE MIDDLE-CLASS AND OTHERS WITH

LARGE CASH HOLDINGS, INCLUDING ETHIOPIANS AND LOCAL EXPATRIATES WHO HAVE TAKEN ETHIOPIAN CURRENCY ABROAD AND WHO WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY GETTING MONEY BACK INTO COUNTRY IN TIME TO MEET OCTOBER EXCHANGE DEADLINE. (WE ARE DUBIOUS THAT SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS OF FUNDS ARE INVOLVED IN LATTER CASE.)

5. MORE LIKELY CAUSE FOR STRIKES MIGHT BE AS RETALIATORY ACTION FOR EPMG STEP-UP OF ANTI-EPRP CAMPAIGN. WITHIN CITIES, LABOR UNIONS ARE STILL A KEY EPRP SOURCE OF SUPPORT. HENCE, IF EPRP IS TO MOBILIZE RESISTANCE TO GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO NEUTRALIZE EPRP AS FOCAL POINT OF ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY COMPOSITION, ITS BEST HOPE TO DO SO IS THROUGH WORKERS.

6. ONE OTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT SINCE GOVERNMENT PIECemeal SCHEME FOR ORGAINIZING REMAINING FIVE OF NINE BRANCH INDUSTRIAL UNIONS PRIOR TO CREATION OF ALL ETHIOPIAN TRADE UNION (ADDIS ABABA 9960) HAS SO FAR STYMIED DISRUPTIVE EPRP EFFORTS SUCH AS HAD PROVEN SUCCESSFUL LAST SPRING, STRIKE DECISION MAY BE EFFORT TO AVOID THE INEVITABLE. END COMMENT.

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